

FOREWORD

We welcome the return of the Norwegian-British-Swedish Antarctic Expedition, which has worked in Dronning Maud Land from 1949 to 1952. The achievements of this first truly international antarctic expedition have been considerable, and its reports must be eagerly awaited, particularly in the realms of survey, meteorology, glaciology and geology.

We offer our best wishes to the British North Greenland Expedition, which has recently left England for Dronning Louises Land. The expedition, which is the largest polar enterprize to leave the United Kingdom in the last forty years is being undertaken with the co-operation of the Royal Navy, the Army, and the Royal Air Force, and will spend two years in north-east Greenland.

Paul-Émile Victor, whose photograph is our frontispiece, is the founder and director of Expéditions Polaires Françaises. Since 1947 he has been responsible for the revival, on a scale far larger than before, of French participation in polar exploration and research. In particular he has organized major wintering expeditions to Greenland and Terre Adélie in the Antarctic, and has made important contributions to technique. Notable have been his use of aircraft to drop supplies to ground parties using mechanical oversnow vehicles, and to maintain a scientific station in the centre of the Greenland ice cap. By initiating and sustaining Expéditions Polaires Françaises, with a central office in Paris to provide continuity between successive field parties, Victor has stimulated an interest in polar research among his countrymen and has added prestige to the name of France. In May 1952 he was awarded the Patron's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society in recognition of his achievements.

We congratulate Dr R. C. Wallace on his appointment as Executive Director of the Arctic Institute of North America. Until recently Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Dr Wallace will bring to the Arctic Institute a great fund of personal experience and wisdom. The Institute has its main office in Montreal, and two additional offices, one in New York and one in Washington. Dr Wallace will continue to live in Kingston, but will spend substantial time in Montreal and elsewhere on Institute business.

The Scott Polar Research Institute is known for its diverse collections of publications, manuscripts, photographs and equipment. The collection of equipment samples is growing rapidly, but is not yet sufficiently comprehensive. Its object is to illustrate and stimulate the evolution of new designs suitable for the different techniques of exploration. Evolution may result either from using old materials in a new way, or from using new materials for

the first time. The demands of new circumstances can, however, most appropriately be met by reviewing an evolutionary series of a particular item, and then developing the most promising pattern. The Scott Polar Research Institute is building and maintaining such series, but their value would increase enormously if more information could be made available. The aim must be to have samples of all types of equipment used by particular expeditions in particular circumstances, and to discover why variation and development take place. To achieve this aim, the Institute must rely on the active help of individuals not only to present samples of well-tested equipment, but also to describe in detail the advantages and disadvantages of any differences. It should not be forgotten that failure, and the reasons for it, are often as interesting as success. Only in this way can hard-won experience be preserved for future use. We therefore seek the personal aid of those who are in a position to help, more especially of those recently returned from the field.

The Scott Polar Research Institute has now published the first of a series of Special Publications which will appear from time to time. The first volume is entitled *The Northern Sea Route. Soviet exploitation of the North-East Passage*, by Terence Armstrong. Copies are available at the Institute, price twenty-one shillings (three dollars) each. Owing to the high cost of printing, it is unfortunately impossible for Special Publications to be sent free to organizations with which the Institute has exchange arrangements for the Polar Record.

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